

The Need for Temperance

On Organizational Leadership and Temperance

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Abstract

This article explores how temperance as a virtue relates to organizational leadership. The study begins with a short survey of classical Greek and Christian notions of temperance before proceeding to explore temperance in relation to self-leadership, visionary and strategic leadership, and relational leadership. The final part of the article offers reflections on how temperance might be cultivated from a theological perspective. Temperance is understood not only as sound thinking but also as embodied self-control and active patience. On the level of self-leadership, it is argued that temperance enables the leader to establish forms of integrity that protect the leader's self from chaos and destruction. Moreover, temperance may also nurture focused visionary leadership that accepts ethical limits and has an eye to the common good. The study also suggests that organizations should cultivate a culture of strategic discipline that is capable of realizing such visions. On the interpersonal level, temperance is viewed as critical in terms of enabling leaders to treat co-workers with respect and wisdom and handle conflict with consideration. Finally, it is argued that the cultivation of temperance is not a one-way street from the inside to the outside or a subordination of feelings to reason but rather a very complex process that includes interpersonal humility, finds vision in an encounter with the good, and yet remains a personal responsibility.

Introduction

This article explores how temperance as a virtue relates to organizational leadership. In this article, I primarily focus on what temperance means for individual leaders who perform leadership within the context of a given organization. The study begins with a short survey of classical Greek and Christian notions of temperance. Because the purpose of this study is more constructive and practical than historical, I do not discuss the interesting variety of historical materials in much depth. Instead, I focus on central elements that are considered critical in terms of applying classical conceptions of temperance to contemporary leadership. I then proceed to exploring temperance as an individual virtue before exploring how it relates to the visionary, strategic, relational, and spiritual dimensions of organizational leadership. In the final part of the article, I also offer some reflections on how temperance might be acquired from a more distinctive theological perspective.

What is temperance?

The idea of temperance as a central or cardinal virtue has its roots in the Greek and Christian traditions. Greek philosophers mainly proposed a virtue-based or *eudaemonistic* conception of ethics. This conception implies that human well-being (*eudaimonia*) is the highest aim of moral thought and conduct. The virtues (*arête*, or excellence) are moral qualities, skills and dispositions that enable an individual or a society to attain this goal (*telos*) (Frede, 2013). In his main work on politics, “The Republic”, Plato (2012) identified four cardinal virtues that are essential to the well-being of society: wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. The meaning of *sophrosyne*, which can be translated as either moderation or temperance,¹ is very complex. *Sophron* literally means of “sound mind” but in Greek literature, *sophrosyne* can take on a variety of meanings, such as prudent, rational, self-controlled, purposeful, disciplined and modest (Luck, 1985).

Plato seems to use the term in several ways: As Dorothea Frede (2013) observes, Plato's ethical philosophy was subject to various revisions during his long life. In the dialogue on *sophrosyne*, “Charmides”, he seems to define ethics primarily as an intellectual virtue of humble self-reflection that acknowledges the limits of knowledge and one's own insight (Syse, 2009, p. 47). In “The Republic”, temperance or moderation is a combination of intellectual belief and a certain social disposition. As belief (*doxa*, 431e), it is a shared vision of how the state should be organized in terms of ‘order’ (*kosmos*) and good relations that are described in terms of consonance (*sumphonia*) and ‘harmony’ (*harmonia*). As a disposition, it enables the citizens to regulate their pleasures and control their basic desires so that they can obey the laws in a peaceful and civil manner (430d–432a). In “The Republic”, where the parts of the city are compared to the parts of the human soul, temperance may have a significant social function in the sense that it controls the desires of the lower classes to “move out of place.” However, Plato also seems to view temperance as a regulating principle on an individual level that is capable of creating some form of tension-filled integration between different human desires (Tongeren, 2002).

Temperance, then, may be understood as both an intellectual quality and a bodily-social disposition. Moreover, it is both a civic and an individual virtue in the sense that it contributes to a just and cohesive society, in addition to more harmonious persons. Aristotle seems to define the term more narrowly, as bodily inhabited or “nonrational”, moderation in matters of eating and drinking and bodily sensations. This position moves in the “opposite direction” of Plato's somewhat more intellectual perception of *sophrosyne* (Burger, 2009, p. 1087). However, Syse (2009, p. 60) suggests that temperance also may be associated with the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, which is the desirable midpoint between two extremes, one of excess and the other of deficiency. If this is correct, then temperance may be interpreted as a more integrating virtue that helps the human actor to identify and realize the ethical mean that perfects human life (Syse, 2009).

¹ Moderation is used here as an equivalent of temperance. In Cicero, the Latin terms *moderatio* and *temperantia* are both translations of the Greek *sophrosyne* (see Tongeren 2002).

This interpretation of temperance as a type of supportive virtue is also present in Thomas Aquinas' medieval synthesis of Christian and Greek thinking.² Thomas rejects the idea that temperance is the realization of the good (Aquinas, 1981).³ According to the Thomist philosopher Joseph Pieper, the reason is that “*temperantia* is: not itself the stream. But it is the shore, the banks, from whose solidity the stream receives the gifts of straight un hindered course, of force, descent and velocity” (Pieper, 1966, p.175). In other words, temperance does not initiate the affections that inspires moral action, but it is crucial in terms of integrating or directing these into a balanced whole. It is at this point that we understand that moderation may qualify as a proto-virtue in John Davenport's (2001) sense of a necessary condition for the attainment of other moral virtues. By preserving order in the human actor, temperance creates the indispensable prerequisite for “both the realization of actual good and the actual movement of man towards his good” (Pieper, 1966, p. 175). As Davenport (2001, p. 271) suggests, courage, for instance, may empower a given individual to acknowledge noble life projects, but without temperance, courage may gravitate towards destructive hubris.

This short survey of historical materials may therefore indicate that temperance is an important virtue for organizational leaders for at least two reasons. First, it is regarded by the tradition as one of the four virtues that are essential for people who want to build good societies and organizations. Second, it might be regarded as a proto-virtue that is essential for the attainment of other virtues. Common to Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas is the notion that temperance has an important integrating and balancing function on the individual level. The integrating function should be understood in relation to two key components: (1) temperance as embodied and self-control capable of structuring the process of integration; and (2) temperance as ‘the sound and balanced mind’ capable of guiding the process. Because the aim of this article is to explore what temperance means for individual leaders, this study will begin to explore the integrating function of temperance on the individual level. I will then proceed to explore the consequences of temperance in relation to the organization and its social context and observe how it affects visionary, strategic and relational leadership.

Temperance as a virtue of self-leadership

Temperance as active patience and self-control

Several leadership theorists view temperance as essential for self-leadership (Eastman, 2010, Brunstad 2009, Havard, 2010). Perhaps the most basic indicator of temperance is what Syse (2009) calls the ability of “holding back”. This ability also includes the bodily mastery of the pain associated with resisting the human drive for “instant need gratification” (Pieper

² Medieval theologians such as Thomas Aquinas adopted the idea of the four cardinal virtues but added theologically grounded virtues such as faith, love and hope to the Greek scheme. More importantly, they redefined the ultimate good (*summa bonum*) in terms of a life that is in communion with the triune God. Thus, theological virtues move humans beyond natural virtues. Natural virtues pertain to the happiness of this life that is “proportionate” to human nature. Theological virtues move beyond this realm to the supernatural good of life with God (see McInerney & Callaghan 2014).

³ Aquinas suggests that temperance is the least important among the seven cardinal virtues (Aquinas, 1981, p. II,II,123,12;II,II, 143, 8).

1966,187). This ability might have a “family resemblance” with what Stephen Covey (Covey, 2004) calls the habit of being *proactive* in the sense of being able to give responsible, reflective and volitional responses to both internal and external stimuli. I suggest that these qualities might be summed up in Brunstad’s (2009, p. 153) interpretation of temperance as a form of “active patience.”

Active patience may be viewed as both bodily self-control and as a sound mind that is capable of impulse control because it is searching for the wisest alternative in the situation.⁴ Such patience may clearly be instrumental in terms of enabling the leader to develop a balanced approach to both personal needs and one’s professional will. In line with Alexandre Havard (2007, 1577), I therefore suggests that temperance comprises an element of detachment – from money, power, one’s good name, and all manner of worldly things.

However, it is worth noticing that the Aristotelian concept of the ‘mean’ implies that temperance in general is a matter of directing rather than suppressing one’s needs, allowing us to be masters of our desires instead of becoming their slaves (Comte-Sponville, 2002). From this perspective, temperance is not detachment in the sense of apathy but rather a proper integration of different human affections that fits with human nature according to the proper *telos* or purpose of human life. The balancing or integration of human desires is therefore to some degree dependent on a specific vision of human nature and the good life (Sandel, 2009).

It follows that conceptions of temperance are, at least to some degree, tradition-dependent or vision-dependent. On the individual level, traditions manifest in different ultimate goals that structure a given person’s life – and motivate different forms of temperance. The business entrepreneur, the statesman, the world-class athlete and the devoted religious leader may therefore develop both similar and different forms of temperance and, at times, abstinence, depending on their respective visions of the good life. Notably, such visions in Aristotelian philosophy can be integrated by an overarching vision of the good society.⁵

However, leaders who want to live a temperate life will undoubtedly benefit from working out a personal life vision within a larger moral horizon.⁶ Both the Greek and the Christian traditions suggest that what Handy (1998, p. 114) calls a “doctrine of enough” or a “theory of limits” should be an integral part of such visions. Syse (2009, p.47) suggests that knowing oneself involves the process of identifying the ethical boundaries in all domains of life. This process includes critical self-reflection on one’s consumption of material goods and one’s relationships with sexuality, food and other bodily sensations. Clear boundaries and a sound mind may also help the leader to resist the temptations that, according to Collins (2009, p. 64), follow from success: the urge for an unlimited pursuit of more fame, more privileges and more money. Thus, as Havard (2010) suggests, temperance protects our interior lives “from the forces of chaos and destruction” (p. 1568).

⁴ This view might imply that *sophrosyne* is intimately connected to practical wisdom (*phronesis*). Interestingly, Brunstad (2009) points to the fact that *sophrosyne* and *phronesis* have the same etymological root. However, as I have suggested above, the term *sophrosyne* can be used in a variety of ways.

⁵ In late modern or so-called postmodern society, Aristotelian ethics may also be used to ground a more multi-communitarian ethics, but this debate is beyond the scope of this article.

⁶ Clearly, such a vision can take many forms: dreams (Handy, 1998), mission statements (Covey, 2004), vision statements (Blanchard, 2003) or, as I have suggested elsewhere, a life prayer.

Temperance as proper self-care, humility and high-mindedness

Thus, ethical self-control is a prerequisite for proper self-love. Aquinas suggests that ‘temperance’ also includes proper self-care or what Pieper calls “a selfless turning towards the self, in which one take responsibility for oneself without becoming self-fixated” (Pieper, 2007, p. 148). As Clor (2008) advocates, it follows that temperance, in the sense of a sound mind, will resist overly individualistic models of personal growth, such as the Romantic idea of an over-riding passion that neglects the need to weigh and balance competing goods. By contrast, the sound mind views itself as interdependent with and created for something larger, and therefore, it is willing to make compromises and live in tension-filled integration with others (Pieper 1966, p.149). Temperance is therefore rooted in (Eastman, 2010, p. 440) or at least strongly interrelated with humility and gratitude (Havard, 2010, p. 1493).

However, it is important to notice that neither temperance nor humility implies a form of mediocrity. This point is brilliantly revealed in Pieper’s (1966) writings on the relationship between humility and what Aquinas calls high-mindedness. Humility is understood as the individual’s estimation of himself according to the truth. High-mindedness is the mind’s striving towards integrity and great things. Pieper employs the metaphor of neighborhood and views humility and high-mindedness as friends that may interact to create a type of coalition. The high-minded person feels the potential for greatness and prepares himself for it with an unshakable firmness of hope. High-mindedness is therefore the antithesis to the caricatures of humility: timidity and small-mindedness. Pieper suggest that a humility that is “too weak or too narrow” to be capable of bearing “the inner tension of cohabitation with high-mindedness is not true humility” (Pieper 1966, p.190). However, authentic humility is the antithesis to the caricature of high-mindedness, self-indulgent pride. A certain tension may exist between humility and high-mindedness, but the synergy between them may clearly overcome both ‘low-minded’ laziness and self-indulgent arrogance (Pieper, 1966, p. 189-192).

Temperance in organizational leadership

Temperance and visionary perception

This powerful combination is clearly highly useful in organizational leadership. A high-minded person who both accepts truth when it comes from others and views himself as interdependent with others might develop a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will. Such leaders might have a “family resemblance” with what Collins (2001) calls level 5 leaders. These leaders resist the temptation to cultivate an individual hero status. Instead, they “channel their energy towards the larger goal of building a great organization” (Collins, 2001, p. 19-21).

Thus, ethical high-mindedness might clearly inspire both visionary thinking and courageous goals. In this sense, vision denotes how the sound-minded person views the world,

generically prior to the process of creating organizational visions statement. I suggest that temperance might refine human perception in general and visionary leadership in particular in at least two ways. The basic component that temperance brings to vision is the recognition of limits, including ethical limits. On the level of visionary leadership, this recognition might help organizational leaders to delimit their focus and help the leaders to focus their energy towards that which is most important, such as the intersection of competence, passion and economic sustainability.⁷

The second element that temperance brings to vision might somewhat paradoxically broaden rather than delimit the perspective of organizational leaders. As Handy (1998, p. 117) notes, a ‘theory of limits’ may also help organizations to relate more adequately to the common goods of its context. In the private sector, the implication is that the “profit requirement” needs to be balanced against the common good – in a long-term perspective. A sound mind that has a balanced vision will therefore encourage the organization to develop what Peter Drucker (2008) calls multiple objectives. These should include social and environmental goals as well as goals that demonstrate care for human resources.⁸

Temperance as strategic discipline

A balanced vision also manifests on the strategic level, where leaders not only imagine desired ends but also handle the means to the realization of those ends. Here, temperance can enable leaders to develop strategic persistence. The alternative is often viewed in organizations where charismatic and impulsive leaders change strategy too often. As a result, strategies are never implemented sufficiently consistently to achieve long-term results. By contrast, the research of Collins and Porras (Collins 2001; Collins & Porras, 2002) shows that not only leaders but also organizations need to establish a persistent culture of strategic discipline.

Collin’s study (2001, Ch. 6) suggests that the difference between the case companies that failed and the companies that prevailed was that discipline in the latter case was created by organizational habits beyond the diligence and persistence of the leader. A culture of discipline is born when the organization begins to recruit self-disciplined people who are willing to go to extreme lengths to fulfill their responsibility. However, the key factor is establishing a clear strategic framework that provides both freedom and responsibility without becoming tyrannical or bureaucratic.

It is beyond the scope of this article to provide an exhaustive list of key organizational disciplines.⁹ However, for my purpose, it might be useful to note at least four examples that

⁷ Jim Collins (2001, p. 94-97) suggests that visions should be limited to the intersection of what ‘we’ are passionate about, what ‘we’ can be best at, and that which is able to drive our economic engine. However, as Collins himself has noted, this works somewhat differently in the public and social sector. Here, temperance might imply that one rejects the resources that drive the organisation away from its core mission and key values (Collins, 2005, p. 23).

⁸ Drucker suggests that organizations need to set objectives in at least eight ‘key areas’: marketing, innovation, human resources, financial resources, physical resources, productivity, profits requirements – and social responsibility (Drucker, 2008, p. 29-31).

⁹ From the perspective of *phronetic* science, providing an exhaustive list of the measurable variables that can be used to predicate success is beyond the scope of the social sciences (Flyvbjerg, 2001). However, the research of

may resonate with temperance as it is understood in the philosophical and theological traditions. The first has already been presented. Action must be guided by a sufficiently clear and consistently shared vision that not only guides action and motivates employees but also inspires habitual practices that are orientated towards and guided by moral goods (Senge, 2006). Second, a culture of discipline also needs to define the operational principles of such practices. What Jim (Collins, 2001) identifies as “Packard’s law “ may serve as an example: ‘No company can grow its revenues consistently faster than its ability to get enough of the right people to implement that growth’. It is worth noticing that it is not only, or even primarily, about recruiting people with the appropriate technical skills, although that is an important aspect of disciplined employment. According to Collins, Hewlett and Packard were best friends in graduate school and simply wanted to work together and create a company with people who shared their values and standards. These standards included a code of ethics and a core ideology that included respect for individuals, a commitment to quality and vision of contributing to the welfare of humanity (Porras & Collins, 2002, pp. 221-22).

The third discipline that follows from such commitments is the use of quality systems and routines that secure cost control and enable the organization to confront the brutal facts in all important areas. These also include systems that provide transparency and expose immoral and greedy forms of mismanagement, such as forms of corruption. In turn, this discipline leads to the fourth discipline: continual learning and innovation. Organizational learning also requires its own sub-disciplines such as team learning and reflection upon mental models, but the integrating principle is according to Senge, systems thinking, which is the capacity of seeing complex and holistic relationships between events and systems.¹⁰ If it includes ethical reflection on the systemic and the oftentimes unintended consequences of decisions, then systems thinking may also be regarded as a moral discipline. Although systems thinking clearly may include a form of utilitarian consideration, one may also move beyond simple utilitarianism towards forms of teleological ethics and perform situational discernment within other traditional moral horizons. Practical wisdom will therefore include pragmatic criteria related to long-term profit, but these criteria should be subordinated to moral traditions that envision the good life for all, including the environment. Thus, when a conflict between ethics and profit arises, the temperate leader will choose ethics over profit and continue to search for moral and ecologically sustainable strategies. This action is clearly important because we live in a global consumer society that may potentially destroy the habitat of future generations.¹¹

Systems thinking can therefore be viewed as a component of the sound mind that ‘tempers’ the organization’s growth and innovation. Collins (2009) has shown that undisciplined innovation may lead great companies to fail because it stretches people and systems beyond their capabilities and causes the organization to employ short-term strategies and

Collins and others might still be very valuable in the larger conversation on organizational virtues that make judgments based on both qualitative and quantitative research.

¹⁰ There are different forms of systems thinking. Senge lists at least 8 types in one of his later works (Senge et al., 2000, pp. 78–79). It might be worth noticing that some form of ‘systems thinking’ might gravitate towards a certain form of Eastern metaphysics (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2008); however, this phenomenon does not apply to every type of systems thinking (e.g., see Archer, 1995).

¹¹ Although I cannot discuss it in depth here, I will simply suggest that there is a connection between greed, consumption and the environmental problems that the world faces today; see also Leonard (2010)

quick-fix solutions. For this reason, Collins actually warns against “discontinuous leaps” into new domains beyond the organization’s core competence. However, the expansion and transformation of companies such as Nokia and Virgin seem to suggest that discontinuous leaps sometimes may succeed.¹² I suggest that this dilemma of innovation parallels the ancient dilemma involving courage and temperance. Such dilemmas cannot be solved by formulas but call for situational discernment and include other virtues such as wisdom. Therefore, neither temperance nor courage can be used as ‘universal recipes for decision making – but temperance may be useful as a regulating principle that provides a process of sound thinking in the course of identifying the right combination of courage and consideration in actual situations.

Temperance and role modelling in interpersonal leadership

Perhaps the most basic component of leadership is leadership by example or what Bernard Bass (Bass & Riggio, 2005) calls ideal influence. Here, moral self-control and organizational leadership merge. Leaders who are able to demonstrate temperance in their stewardship of resources, desires and relations may inspire others to follow so that the organization develops a culture of moderation. Charles Handy notes that there is a close connection between the leader’s doctrine of enough or the lack thereof – and the organization’s incentive system. He suggests that “what the top does today, the middle imitates tomorrow, and the bottom aspires to someday” (Handy, 1998). Leaders, then, must decide on what type of culture they want to model, a culture of greed or a culture of moderation. As I have attempted to demonstrate elsewhere (Tangen, 2012), role modelling occurs not only in front of but also towards one’s co-workers. People are shaped by the manner in which they are treated, and temperance is clearly a key virtue in terms of how leaders are able to manage their feelings in their interactions with co-workers. In discussions, active patience allows the leader to understand before she makes herself understood by expressing her feelings. Similarly, in crises or in tense situations, self-control might help the leader to resist uncontrolled emotional outbursts. Instead, temperance allows the leader to express his or her feelings in a timely manner and make wise decisions.

This form of emotional intelligence is also helpful in terms of allowing the leader to take the time to assess the capability and motivation of co-workers in particular situations. Temperance, then, contributes to the discernment that is needed in situational leadership, including those choices that enable co-workers to grow. Instead of demanding instant results, temperate leaders may allow people to develop competence over time. As Ken Blanchard (Blanchard, 2003) suggests, this is a powerful form of servant leadership that acknowledges the dignity and potential of the co-worker. In this manner, temperance might be instrumental in terms of creating one of the most important ingredients in organizational life: trust.¹³

¹² The story of Richard Branson (2011) might challenge the generalizability of Collins’ theory.

¹³ As Knud Løgstrup suggests, trust is a fundamental premise for human interactions. He writes, “Our life is so constituted that it cannot be lived except as one person lays him or herself open to another person and puts him or herself into that person’s hands either by showing or claiming trust” (Logstrup, 1997). Tian Sørhaug has conducted a very interesting phenomenological analysis that shows how leadership depends on both trust and power.

Temperance, change leadership and conflict resolution

Trust is nevertheless a fragile affection and will be challenged when organizational leaders implement a change or participate in interpersonal conflicts. Here, organizational leadership might benefit from theory and research on temperance in the field of political science. Syse (2009, p. 35-39) presents an interesting model for change leadership based on moderation, in part built on Edmund Burke's and Alexis De Tocqueville's classic criticisms of the French Revolution. He notes that both Burke and Tocqueville were liberals who supported the fundamental ideas that stirred the revolution; however, they were severely critical of the manner in which these ideas were implemented.

A lack of temperance, in the sense of patience and careful consideration, led the rebels to commit several disastrous mistakes. The first flaw of the revolutionaries was that they moved too quickly without sufficient time for critical self-reflection and consideration. One might add that they gave their adversaries and the people they were supposed to serve even less reflective time and space. Second, this impatience inspired an all-or-nothing attitude that disregarded everything associated with the old regime, including moral institutions and juridical principals. In turn, this led the rebels to commit the mistake of disregarding or lacking respect for the dignity of human individuals. In the end, this mistake led them to violate the very principles that inspired the revolution in the first place.

In line with Syse, I suggest that a balanced assessment of established practices and respect for the dignity of individuals should temper any form of transformational leadership so that the cause of an organization or movement is not used to oppress the people it is supposed to empower. Syse also advances a theory of moderation in conflict, where temperance may be needed to enable leaders to hold back in the heat of the battle. The following criteria for the temperate use of power may also apply to an organizational context (see Syse 2009, p. 105-109): (a) the leader should act based on legitimate authority; (b) the leader must present good and documented reasons for his engagement; (c) power should be used according to measures of fairness and in proposition to the matter at hand; and (d) the strategy should have a fair chance of succeeding. Finally, I would add that (e) superiors or peers should hold leaders accountable for their use of power so that it does not escalate beyond the absolutely necessary.

I suggest that, in situations of internal conflict, the primary strategy nevertheless should be to seek a form of fair reconciliation or conflict resolution. Temperance will enable leaders to first seek what Galtung (1996) calls transcendent solutions. In my view, this phenomenon can be viewed as a form of transformational or servant leadership where leaders, for the sake of the common good – and the dignity of individuals, seek to create win-win solutions that transcend individual interests and yet leave the conflicting parties with more than they initially wanted (Galtung, 1996).

Here, active patience may also depend on practical wisdom to distinguish between moral compromises, on one hand, and what one might call “Machiavellian compromises”, on the other hand. The latter is based on a desire to hold one’s position of power at any cost and may degenerate into transactional bargaining solely based on the will to power.¹⁴ Such compromises are what Georgia Jones Sorenson and James McGreggor Burns call the “perils of moderation” (Burns & Sorenson, 1999). However, philosophical moderation may transcend Machiavellian compromises. Good statesmanship, according to Harry Clor, will “weigh and balance inevitably competing goods and interests, with the result that in one degree or another concessions are made and compromises achieved” (Clor, 2008, p.113). Thus, temperate leaders seek to create a perhaps tension-filled integration of common goods as they seek to create win-win solutions.

One might add that research shows that transformational leadership and transactional leadership may supplement one another (Bass & Riggio, 2005), although a certain tension may exist in certain situations (see Tangen 2012, Ch. 11).¹⁵ In conflicts, transformational leadership includes being a role model in terms of showing good will and, where appropriate, admitting and apologizing for mistakes. However, because opponents and co-workers may also move beyond transactional exchange to the immoral use of their resources, at times, leaders must also move beyond conventional transactional leadership. I have suggested elsewhere that leaders, under certain conditions, should use power in terms of sanctioning and firing if they face corruption and greed in their own organizations (Tangen 2012). Thus, when organizational leaders face situations where mediation has broken down due to moral failures, or reconciliation is impossible, they must use legitimate forms of power to protect the organization. However, such actions should always be guided by the criteria that were presented above – for the sake of human dignity.

On the emergence of temperance – a theological perspective

We may now turn to the question of how temperance may be acquired. This question is far from easy to answer. One might suggest that the attainment of virtues may include a change of mind or what management professor Peter Senge calls *metanoia*. He suggests that “to grasp the meaning of *metanoia* is to grasp the deeper meaning of learning”, given that learning also involves a fundamental shift or “movement of mind” (Senge 2006, p.13). The self-help philosopher Steven Covey also claims that behavioral change needs to be rooted in how we view

¹⁴ According to Machiavelli, the prince should secure three things: first, the preservation of power, specifically, his own; second, the preservation of his principality; and third, the preservation of peace, or at least, order. Clor (2008) views Machiavelli’s theory as amoral, and the use of ‘Machiavellian’ above follows this interpretation. It is worth noticing, however, that Machiavelli’s political philosophy may be defended from the perspective of political (and theological) realism as a moral perspective orientated towards the common good (Jenkins & Jenkins, 1998).

¹⁵ In some situations, James McGreggor Burns’ preference for uncompromising visionary leadership seems to be legitimate. The Irish friar, Father Matthew, who preached total abstinence, might serve as an example. His motto ‘Ireland sober is Ireland free’ may have prepared the path for Irish independence. Another example would be Martin Luther King’s persistent demand for civil rights. By contrast, the Christian leaders who resisted the civil rights movements in the USA in the 1960s, clinging to a form of ‘moderation’, in retrospect seem to have made pragmatic compromises in an unholy alliance with injustice.

the world. Thus, he portrays moral formation as an “inside-out process.” He suggests that the virtues of self-leadership can be acquired if leaders actively make a habit of four human endowments, i.e., self-consciousness, moral conscience, free will and imagination, and form a life vision that must be implemented through the practice of building corresponding habits (Covey 2004). The implication is that character is acquired through a combination of moral reflection and persistent engagement in practices that cultivate self-discipline. At present, I agree with both Covey and John Maxwell, who correctly assumes that the struggle for developing a leader within us never ends (Maxwell, 2005).

However, I suggest that it is a mistake to understand the cultivation of temperance as a process in which feelings are ‘subordinated’ to reason (contra Covey 2004 and Clor 2008). The reason is, as the British sociologist Margaret Archer proposes, that detached reasoning cannot move us to make moral choices in the long term. It is better to view the inner conversation, in which one identifies one’s moral commitments, as a socially conditioned but not socially determined process that creates second-order emotions (Archer, 2001). Such second-order emotions include deeper convictions that empower both intuitive and cognitive forms of temperance in everyday life and provide what Charles Taylor calls strong evaluative measures for the process of trans-evaluating “first-order feelings” (Taylor, 1985).

This argument seems to imply that moral self-leadership may emerge from an affective moral vision that may guide one’s personal and professional life – by means of temperance. The integrating function of temperance may, as Pieper seems to suggest, depend on other virtues such as love for the good. I have suggested above that tangible forms of temperance depend on moral visions or traditions. Such visions, or what Charles Taylor calls social imaginaries, may also grasp the agents in the sense that they infuse deep and relatively stable affections that empower human agency over time and inspire participation in moral practices.¹⁶ *Metanoia*, or what Senge calls deeper learning, may therefore be understood as a change of mind towards certain moral visions of the good that empower moral agency.

However, practitioners of leadership cannot rest on the abstract notion of a moral vision; they need to turn towards a specific vision of the good. For this reason, I now turn to the Christian tradition, the normative horizon that surrounds my role as a researcher in practical theology. From such a theological perspective, love for the good is rooted in love for God.¹⁷ From the perspective of theology, it is possible to suggest that love for the good is primarily given through the revelation of God’s love in Jesus Christ and is mediated through the Holy Spirit. Other sources of revelation such as reason and experience may therefore be seen through the lens of what Richard Hays calls the moral vision of the New Testament (Hays, 1996).

It follows that love for the good is not only a fruit of cognitive reflection but also a gift from God, emerging from a deep sense of trust and gratitude that is grounded in God’s grace and given by God’s Spirit (Gal 5:6, 22-23; see also 1. John: 4: 10-19). Temperance is certainly nurtured moral reflection and persistent participation in moral and communal and organizational practices that form virtues and habits; however, from a theological perspective, this

¹⁶ For a discussion of social imaginaries and a Pentecostal theology of affections, see Smith (2010).

¹⁷ See recent works in Pentecostal theology (Land, 2010) and philosophy (Smith, 2009). These authors also provide a much-needed pneumatological perspective on virtue and human agency.

idea is only the second half of the story that begins with God's revelation in Jesus Christ and the grace that is given through the Spirit (Land 2010). It follows that the formation of temperance is more than hard work; it is also a gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers through transforming (or sacramental) practices (2. Cor 3:17-18, Gal 5:22-23¹⁸, 2. Tim 1:7). Simultaneously, it is worth noticing that Paul argues that even love for God needs to be enlightened by knowledge and wisdom to make adequate judgments about the world (Phil 1:7-8). Thus, 'soundness of mind' (2. Tim 1:7-8) seems to appear as an interplay of virtues, where active patience, driven by love and guided by wisdom, enables balanced perspectives on the world – and wise choices in particular situations.

This interplay of virtues does not primarily emerge through individual reflection; rather, it depends on communal practices. Love guided by temperance is a 'feel for the game of life' that is emerging in interaction with God and others. This game includes not only forms of worship where people encounter God's grace in Jesus Christ and forms of mutual service where members of an organization give and receive but also painful processes where every person must learn to forsake and repent from selfishness and greed in a process of deep learning or conversion (*metanoia*). In my view, even the intellectual aspect of *sophrosyne* needs to be developed through what Paul calls *tapeinophrosyne* (Phil 2:3-4) – humble and loving interaction with others, which might include mutual correction, in terms of both criticism and encouragement. This type of discernment seeks practical knowledge, and therefore, it also listens to the wisdom that is conveyed in narratives, the experiences of others, which were an important component of Pauline epistemology (Scott, 2008).

The leader who wants to cultivate temperance is therefore dependent on a community if he wants to educate his desires for self-control and develop the wisdom of the sound mind. If this proposition is correct, then the cultivation of temperance is not a one-way street from the inside to the outside or a subordination of feelings to reason but rather a complex process that includes interpersonal humility, finds vision in an encounter with the sacred, and yet remains a personal responsibility.

Conclusion

In this article, I have shown that the classical conceptions of temperance may be applied to contemporary organizational leadership. Temperance may be understood as sound thinking, embodied self-control and active patience in relation to others – within a moral vision. On the personal level, temperance facilitates personal integrity and protects the leader's 'inner self' from chaos and destruction. On the interpersonal level, temperance enables leaders to treat co-workers with respect and wisdom and handle change and conflict with consideration. On the organizational level, temperance enables leaders to establish a culture of strategic discipline that is capable of realizing economic and morally sustainable visions. In the last part of this article, I have suggested that the acquisition of this virtue is not only a matter of moral reflection, personal vision and persistent participation in moral practices and habits. From a strictly

¹⁸ I include the term *egkratia*, which Tongeren (2002) views as a more external form of self-control; however, as a fruit of the Spirit, it may also become a sort of second nature that is very similar to *sophrosyne*.

theological perspective, temperance is also a gift, given by God, revealed in Jesus Christ and mediated through the moral vision of the New Testament, the presence of the Holy Spirit and the community of the saints.

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